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JULY 2001

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July 2001

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COMING EVENTS

JUL	3	General Meeting		FNCV Fauna Group—Raymond Gibson
	5	Mid-week Bird Excursion	*	Alcoa/Pt Henry Wetlands. Leader: Margaret Cameron
	10	Plant Group		Workshop
	15	Excursion		Swan Island and Sand Island
	17	Bird Group		'Birds in the Bendigo Area' Chris Tsaros
	24	Biodiversity Group		Workshop
	29	OBP count		(Contact Barry Lingham)
AUG	7	Birthday Dinner	*	(See notice on page one)
	14	Plant Group		Workshop
	TBA	Boneseed Pull		You Yangs
	16	Mid-week Bird Group Excursion		Queenscliff Golf Course (OBPs?)
	19	Excursion: Inverleigh Common		Leaders: Gordon McCarthy & Dave King
	21	Bird Group		Reedy Lake Survey – Trevor Pescott
	28	Biodiversity Group		Workshop

* Changes to program

The closing date for the next magazine will be Monday evening, 30 July, 2001.
Early lodgement of articles (small & large) would be a great help - late copy may not be accepted.
Hard copy or diskette to 4 White Street, Belmont, 3216
Email: cndgreenwell@myplace.net.au
Phone Claire: 03 5243 7047 or Mobile 0416 006407

NEWS BITES!

- The Geelong Environment Council Seminar – *Biosphere Reserve, Western Port Phillip Bay, Connewarre & Swan Island* – will take place on 12.7.2001 at 8.00 pm at the Geelong Historic Records Centre, Little Mallop St.
- Dave King reports that the Rail Trail from Geelong to Queenscliff has been completed. They are looking ahead to forming linear trails linking the Bellarine Rail Trail through Little River to the Metropolitan trails around the Bay.
- **VFNCA 2001 Spring Campout** will be held at the **Grampians** 26 – 30 October 2001. It will be based at Camp Acacia in Halls Gap. Accommodation and meals – Friday dinner to Tuesday lunch inclusive $170 – $175, Friday dinner to Sunday lunch inclusive $100. Meals only Friday to Tuesday $110, Friday to Sunday $70. Attending but not staying or eating at Camp Acacia $30.
  Contact person Joan Pitaro, 25 George Road, Ararat, 3377 Phone 03 5352 3632
- The Victorian National Parks Association and the Maryborough Field Naturalists' Club are holding a camp at Paddy's Ranges State Park, adjacent to Maryborough, on 6 & 7 October 2001. It has been organised by a steering committee which includes the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria, the Federation of Walking Groups and Birds Australia. The camp aims to provide a fun weekend at which many people will have an opportunity to enjoy the bush and learn more about **Box-Ironbark woodlands. Adults $20, children $10, or family $50.**
  Contact person: Jason Doyle, Woodlands Campaigner
  Phone 03 9650 8296 (Head Office) or email jdoyle@vnpa.org.au

Our 40th Birthday Celebration

The Geelong Field Naturalists' Club Inc. was formed 40 years ago.
To celebrate this event, the 7th August General Meeting will be replaced by a dinner at Aberdeen Chateau, 115 Aberdeen Street, Newtown.
This will be a great opportunity to meet some of the original foundation members, discuss old times and see how the GFNC has evolved over four decades.
Trevor Pescott will be a guest speaker.
The two course meal, main & desert, plus tea or coffee will cost $20.00.
($10.00 discount to foundation & first year members.)

If you can attend, please contact Barry Lingham at the July meeting or as soon as possible.
Phone 03 5255 4291
If you need to arrange a lift to the function, or if you can assist in driving others, please contact Barry.

Our speaker tonight is Raymond Gibson from the FNCV Fauna Group.
The FNCV Fauna Group has undertaken many surveys of mammals at various sites throughout Victoria. Ray has been involved with the group since 1972. He has participated in the 'Stag Watch' program in mountain ash areas, the Rushworth Forest nestbox program and surveys of the New Holland Mouse in the Dutson Downs area of Gippsland.

For next month...
please see the invitation this page!

ADVANCE NOTICE
2001/2002 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please note that if you have not paid your annual subscription by **20 July 2001** you will not receive the August issue of the *Geelong Naturalist* or any future issues until the amount is paid.

Thank you to those members who have already renewed their membership for the current year.

JULY 15 EXCURSION DETAILS – page 3

For more notices... see pages 3, 12, 13 & 14

OUT AND ABOUT

...Valda Dedman

Tiger Moths, Barwon Heads Bluff in midwinter—rocks and seawrack, Exford Road trees, our lone pines, and ...

The moth I found galloping over my carpet last May was indeed a Black and White Tiger Moth *Spilosoma glatigyni.* It pupated in a hairy case and at the beginning of June emerged as a beautiful creamy-white moth patterned in black stripes and blotches. Its body was pale underneath, striped on the sides with rich brown, and bright vermilion above with a row of black chevrons. It looked as if it was wearing a white furry cap. Her thighs were also bright vermilion and thickly haired. I say 'her' because, whilst I was awaiting a photographic opportunity, she produced several patches of round cream-coloured eggs. Parthenogenesis (reproduction without a male) is not unknown in the world of moths, but not recorded for this species.

Tiger Moths belong to the family Arctiidae, which has some 340 named Australian species. They are weak flyers, generally nocturnal, and many are brightly coloured or have striped bodies. Some members of this family are called 'Footmen' because they fold their wings closely along the body. The Red Footman moth *Scoliacma bicolora* is half orange and half black, and its caterpillar feeds on lichen, as does that of *Eutane terminalis*, the Banded Lichen Moth, which is small, black and yellow.

Butterflies are showy, active by day when their bright colours are caught in the sunshine; many moths are creatures of the night, so we are not always aware of their beautiful subtle patterning. We bewilder moths with artificial light and cause them to batter themselves to death. Swift moths tapping at our windows are not asking to be let in. They would rather be flying swiftly in the darkness, navigating by natural illuminations and signals.

Some moths are incredible camouflage experts. If you keep a sharp eye out, you may find that a piece of bark or leaf or rock has wings. Not so much at the moment, though. A moth's life is brief and most won't survive the winter. Instead, caterpillars will be safely cocooned away, or the next generation will be developing inside eggs, waiting for warmer weather. So I hope my Tiger Moth attracted a male, mated and laid fertilised eggs on a suitable food plant, such as Dandelion, Plantain, Senecio or Hop Goodenia.

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Barwon Heads Bluff in midwinter with the tide going out. Magnificent. After the wild weather the sand has a dark crust of ground up basalt from the offshore reefs and seaweeds lie piled up in enormous tangled masses. As the sea retreats, two limpet species and three sorts of barnacle are left high and dry, blue periwinkles fill the cracks and mini depressions, the blue-green alga *Symploca* that feels like soft hair and looks black, coats other rocks, fingernail-sized mussels *Xenostrobus pulex* have their own sites.

The western side of the bluff is a tumble and jumble of rock—golden rough sandstone, creamy dune limestone, bits of conglomerate, some with big abalone and turban shells embedded. The shore platform itself is weathered brownish-grey basalt, the cliff that sits on it is aeolianite — dunes cemented by calcite (lime). The dense fine-grained rock is calcrete, formed when shell lime was dissolved by surface and rainwater and then redeposited in the rock.

The huge leathery fronds of the bull kelp *Durvillaea potatorum* look like giant drive belts for machinery. In reality they are a source of emulsifiers for ice cream. This species occurs from Bermagui on the New South Wales coast and disappears about Robe in South Australia. It is common on Tasmanian shores.

It gets its scientific name from the French botanist and explorer Dumont D'Urville. *Potatorum* means 'of drinkers' and refers to the fact that Tasmanian aborigines used the folded fronds as pouches for carrying water. The giant kelp *D. antarctica* of New Zealand is illustrated on that country's five dollar note. Kelp fronds can be used in hand-made baskets and have been the inspiration for a children's story. See the originals of the pictures for *The Hidden Forest,* by Jeannie Baker, now on exhibition at the Geelong Art Gallery. There are also some fine examples of botanical illustration by local artists and the story of Daniel Bunce, first curator of the Geelong Botanical Gardens. Bunce recognised the value of Australian species and planted wattles and blue gums in Eastern Park. They were later removed.

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Along the Exford Road on the last Club excursion we found two very different tree types, one belonging to semi-arid regions, one from the wetter east coast and both just about at the limit of their range. Both were adorned with mistletoe. The Buloke mistletoe *Amyema linophyllum* was grey-green and mimicked its host. The Box mistletoe *A. miquellii* stood out like a sore thumb. It is associated with a wide range of both acacias and eucalypts, whereas *A. linophyllum* occurs only on bulokes and belahs *Casuarina cristata.*

Specimens of the blue (or green) box *Eucalyptus baueriana* were first collected by Ferdinand Bauer at Port Jackson about 1803. It is a broad crowned tree that grows up to 20 metres tall. Rough grey fibrous bark covers the trunk and larger branches. The leaves are round and the fruits wineglass shaped with the valves below the rim. Blue Box timber is said to be very durable and fire-resistant. The species is found on loamy river flats in sheltered lowlands along the coast from the Queensland border to round about Lakes Entrance. It is then found at Heyfield, in the Broadford-Wallan region, and then along the Werribee River, with its most westerly occurrence around the headwaters of the Moorabool River. (*Wild Plants of Victoria* CD-Rom). Are these western outliers indicators of a warmer, wetter climate in former times?

The Bulokes *Allocasuarina luehmannii* are probably a result of the rain shadow area that also produces the Long Forest mallee. The trees along Exford Road are among the last naturally occurring in the Geelong region. In the past they probably extended right up to the You Yangs. Adcock lists the species in his 1897 *Census of the indigenous plants of the Geelong district*, published in Volume 6, No. 2 of the original *Geelong Naturalist*. Bulokes have branchlets that are long and wiry and their cones are short with only two to three rows of valves.

Bulokes commonly occur with Cypress Pine, another interesting botanical remnant which is found at the Organ Pipes National Park, where it has been introduced and persists. In 1942 two White Cypress Pine *Callitris glaucophylla* were found at Jackson's Creek. Only one now remains. The species once grew close to Geelong. Williamson (1911) wrote in the *Geelong Naturalist* of a few growing on the steep south bank of the Barwon some distance above the paper mill. More recently there were relict populations at Batesford, Maude, Bamganie, Bacchus Marsh and the Werribee Gorge. Unfortunately the species is now extinct at Batesford, but in 1998 eleven trees were found at Maribyrnong. It is listed as vulnerable in Victoria.

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And ... the November 1897 *Geelong Naturalist* contains a letter from J. Douglas Ogilby to the secretary of the GFNC in which he identifies three specimens of Tupong sent to him by the club. They are the same as the Tasmanian species, *Pseudaphritis urvillii*. Another tribute to Dumont D'Urville. A 1988 survey, by Hall and Tunbridge, found that Tupong were still common in the lower reaches of the Barwon. What is their status today? The current CCMA surveys should provide us with much-needed information on the biodiversity of the Barwon catchment.

The *Geelong Naturalist* has always been an invaluable source of data on our local flora and fauna.

MAMMAL STUDY GROUP REPORT JUNE 2001

...Trevor Pescott

Barramunga Cabins, Mammal trapping weekend, 9 – 11 June 2001.

A small group spent some time in the Otway Ranges, 'camped' in the comfort of the Barramunga Cabins.

We set 29 mammal traps on three nights, and caught 6 Brown Antechinus, 1 Dusky Antechinus and 4 Bush Rats, i.e. 11 animals from 87 trap-nights.

Measurements and some photographs were taken, and Dave King collected some hair samples some of which he cross-sectioned and others set flat on microscope plates.

The section of Bush Rat hair was particularly interesting when viewed under the microscope, revealing the typical boomerang or banana shape of all rats' hair.

We had some time spare during the two days – took a short trip to Stephensons Falls on Saturday and a longer visit to Maits Rest and Aire Valley on Sunday.

At Aire Valley, there were interesting fungi under the giant redwoods – the strange jelly *Pseudohydnum gelatinosum*, and corals including yellow flames *Clavulinopsis amoena,* some red flames *C. miniata* and a few whites *C. rugosa*. There were some glow-worms along the track near the cabins.

The bird list covered only 15 species, the best Southern Boobook, Forest Raven and Gang-gang Cockatoo.

EXCURSION – JULY 15 SWAN & SAND ISLANDS

Depart from Little Ryrie Street carpark at 9:00 am. Arrive at Gatehouse to Swan Island (Bridge Street Queenscliff) 9:30 am.

Car shuffle to minimise cars - Enter gates at 9:40 am.

Ramble along sections of of the golf course and coastal bushland - looking for OBP's and other birds plus observing the vegetation and topology. The walk will cover about 5 kilometres over 2 hours.

Lunch at Sand Island. Exploration of the lagoon area after lunch, a walk of about 2 kilometres.

Depart at around 2.30 pm, stop to view Swan Bay and then on to Freshwater Lake (Clows Rd) off the Ocean Grove Road to see waterfowl in abundance.

Note: All persons who wish to attend must let Barry know at the meeting or by phone (52554291) by Tuesday 10th July to be included in the permit.

Bring food and water for the day and wet weather gear including strong footwear. Telescopes and binoculars will be useful.

JULY DIARY

...Joe Hubbard

When you go a-rambling, you never know what you'll come across. Little did I expect a flock of Crested Pigeons close to Geelong or to be sharing a drupe with Mistletoebirds. You don't plan these encounters, but you have to be out there to make them happen for you.

A few days ago, when loading the car in our drive, heard the Little Ravens, glanced up to see them worrying a beautiful White Goshawk. One of those encounters!

The day before, wandered into the back room to finish lunch with some contemplation and a mandarin (not a visitor from overseas!) to find in the poplar, a Hobby half way through its lunch. Another one of those!

Now it's your turn. Go on, be a devil, take a chance! Brighten up things with a winter encounter.

5.7.00 Mt. Donna Buang

Drove to the summit. We were told that there was storm damage. In places it looked like a battlefield but no doubt will soon recover.

The skywalk was open, enabling one to admire the 60 metre tall Mountain Ash trees with some claimed to be 250 – 300 years old. From here you could look down upon the crowns of the Myrtle Beeches which do better than the Ashes for age – up to 400 years old.

Of course, the Tree Ferns were beautiful – smaller ones with fronds cascading down the steep slopes. Everywhere mosses and lichens created their own small worlds.

Patches of snow had collected in the gutters, remains of a recent snowfall.

Probably the highlight was the song of a Lyrebird. In its repertoire, it included the calls of a Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Grey Shrike-thrush, a Honeyeater *(didn't write down which one)*, a Currawong and others I couldn't remember or recognise. It was just brilliant – one of the treasures of our cool temperate rainforests.

8.7.00 Newtown

Val heard them approaching – this strange wailing – faint but increasing in volume. Black Cockatoos! This was an impressive sight – more than 100 great black birds in a loose echelon above us. This great flock was flanked by two smaller, all flying eastwards directly towards the bay.

9.7.00 Anglesea

Bell's Beach Southside walk to the Ironbark Basin – Jarosite Mine.

Mosquito Orchids flowering still – colonies of Nodding Greenhoods – a few Banded Greenhoods looking quite green. A shorter version of a tall greenhood had finished flowering – except for one! Tall Greenhoods in bud and tall!

Prickly Cryptandra, low shrub with tiny white and pink bell flowers easily overlooked in the heathland.

Quite a lot of fungi – obviously several species including some attractive Coral Fungus. Noted a standout specimen with a depressed cap, maroon, spotted and blotched with white, about 5 cm across, white gills and stem.

16.7.00 Newtown

Late afternoon walk along the Barwon River, golf course side, low sun, mirror river sheeted with trees and hillside.

Even the intrusion of other walkers, and their sometimes annoying dogs, could not steal away this beauty.

- 8 Australian Grebes.
- Great old Red Gums.
- Saltbushes, the same as we planted at Jerringot, doing very well up towards Buckley Falls.
- A loud cackling, quacking bird call which we didn't recognise – maybe a Dusky Moorhen – only visible birds in the area.
- Small flock of immature Crimson Rosellas.
- Fantail Cuckoo calling.
- Grey Shrike-thrush.

16.7.00

Lunar eclipse. Perfect night for viewing. Bright moonlight, tracery of shadows from bare trees, clear sky and bright stars.

During the eclipse, the moon was totally obscured which is a rare event.

Eclipses occur once every two or three years.

30.7.00 Casterton (Warrock Homestead)

Stopped on the track into the homestead to watch a one-sided altercation between a Kookaburra and several Magpies.

Kookaburra flew down from its perch in a Red Gum and was mobbed. One Magpie held it by the scruff of its neck, beak full of feathers and skin, whilst about 3 others gave it a jolly good pecking. I expected a death in the Kookaburra family but after a short time the Maggies decided enough was enough and went on with their foraging. A bemused Kooka sat for a while then flew up into the Red Gum. 'Happens all the time' it said to us.

31.7.00 Grampians

Returning from Hamilton, we decided to travel through the Grampians. The weather and scenery (as always!) combined to make the diversion most diverting.

Stopped for morning coffee – an excuse for me to get a 'snapshot' of winter flowers. So we explored a small area not expecting much. Scarlet flowers and shining leaves – Flame Grevillea; Pine Heath, like a soft seedling pine with its yellow tubular bells, Golden Heath – a tiny shrub, stiff sharp leaves, greenish yellow flowers with feathery segments (like a frilly dress), and the Flame Heath, the common heath of this area. Like to say we found the Common Heath to complete the list but we didn't! Looked up and there was what I thought to be a Cypress-pine in flower. Not much!

Further on, a Hakea and a Wattle lined the road ... didn't stop to identify.

Cheers!

Excursion Report
Organ Pipes – Exford Weir
12 June 2001

...Joe Hubbard

It could have been a bird in the hand. A male Mistletoebird, this tiny jewel of the bush, was so close to Dave King he could have grabbed it, but it didn't matter – there were several more in the bush. The bush was a fine example of Buloke Mistletoe bearing fruit.

This was the first planned stop for the excursion, but prior to this, unscheduled bird-watching and plain gazing interrupted progress. Near Lara a car-stopping, power-line perched flock of 15 Crested Pigeons was a great way to start the day!

At the mistletoe, we were treated to a fascinating display of the relationship between plant and birds. We saw one wipe the sticky seed from its beak to branch and another excrete a string of sticky seeds on to another branch. Someone found the purpose of this – a seed showing signs of growth. Over the mistletoe were single berries which appeared to have been placed on its branches. We wondered if the birds were doing this and why – maybe as a food store or a deliberate attempt to propagate.

A couple of us tried the fruit which was sweet and very sticky.

Reluctantly we left the birds to their feasting and met up with the Bob Preston group at the Melton Reservoir. Morning tea, convivial company, and more bird watching. A debate about the identity of a Pied Cormorant, some thinking it was a Darter, was soon settled when someone discovered the real thing (Darter) perched on a barge.

On to the Organ Pipes, lunch, and birds underfoot. A Superb Fairy-wren, resplendent male, hopped around our feet under the picnic-table whilst other wrens and a Brown Thornbill shared the crumbs.

After lunch it was down to the Pipes via the viewing platform which enabled us to overlook the park and the Keilor Plains, which help to make up one of the world's largest lava flows.

The Organ Pipes, a wall of impressive basalt columns, were a product of cooling molten lava which filled a river valley in this area a million years ago.

We walked beside Jackson's Creek which from plains level, had cut down through the basalt, exposing the basalt columns and the underlying sedimentary rock which was formed about four million years ago.

Also exposed by erosion, was the Rosette Rock, a radial display of basalt columns, which drew from the group imaginative ideas of what it could represent.

Further on, near where the Crested Shrike-tit was seen, was the Tessellated Pavement, columns eroded to stream level by the creek.

After the climb out to the carpark, which is situated on an eroded scoria cone, the bird list was completed (see next page), and the day's events digested with the aid of a 'cuppa'.

ANY DRUIDS OUT THERE?

. . . Alban Lloyd-Jones

The winter solstice (June 21), or shortest day, came and went without much comment. No longer do we have old druids and young maidens prancing in the fields – alas, everything changes.

After the shortest day we might expect improved weather but the bad weather has not even started so we have rain, hail and cold to come.

This all sounds rather tiresome but there is one way that perhaps will make the days slip by.

Your sunrise point, somewhere on a neighbour's fence, roof, shrubs or trees where the sun rises, has already gone to its furthest point north and is now on the way south.

So, each morning when you go into an easterly aspect room to open the curtains or whatever, have a look to see where the sun is along that roof etc.

With sunrise so late it is not so difficult to be up at that time.

You will not notice a change on a daily basis but as the weeks go by you will be surprised how far the sunrise point moves.

It does wonders for the soul to see this change and if the weather does not seem to improve think of the other benefits which come with it such as orchids, greenhoods and blossom. They will cheer you up even if the neighbour's fence does not.

The next milestone is the spring equinox when we have equal hours of daylight and darkness – but that is not for ages – September 23 with a lot of chilly weather and snow before then.

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If you are a person who wants results right now instead of waiting then have a look at Mars in the next week or so. It is at its closest point to Earth and a modest telescope will show the polar cap. At 7.00 pm on July 9, it will be about half way between the eastern horizon and its highest point with no other planets to confuse you.

ORGAN PIPES EXCURSION
17 June 2001 – BIRD LIST

Australian Wood Duck
Pied Cormorant
Darter
White-faced Heron
Whistling Kite
Wedge-tailed Eagle
Black-shouldered Kite
Brown Falcon
Masked Lapwing
Crested Pigeon
Corella sp.
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Galah
Eastern Rosella
Red-rumped Parrot
Superb Fairy-wren
Spotted Pardalote
White-browed Scrubwren
Yellow Thornbill
Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Brown Thornbill
Red Wattlebird
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
Noisy Miner
White-plumed Honeyeater
Eastern Yellow Robin
Crested Shrike-tit
Golden Whistler
Grey Shrike-thrush
Grey Fantail
Willie Wagtail
Magpie-lark
Australian Magpie
Little Raven
White-winged Chough
Red-browed Finch
European Goldfinch
Mistletoebird
Welcome Swallow
Tree Martin
Silvereye
Common Starling
Common Myna
Common Blackbird

Press release:

BANDICOOTS BACK IN PORTARLINGTON?

This dream by a Portarlington resident, Keith Knights, has spurred the formation of a small group to encourage support from within the Portarlington community to participate in the restoration of the Point Richards Flora and Fauna Reserve. A Field Day will be held at the Reserve on Sunday October 14.

This day has been designated as 'Call to Action Day' statewide.
The group is seeking input from groups within the community or individuals who may have information on the history of the Reserve area. Others may wish to become involved with an aim to forming a 'Friends of the Flora and Fauna Reserve'.

The Reserve area is under the control of the Bellarine Bayside Foreshore Committee of Management Inc. who manages the area on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. The Foreshore Committee is supportive of the project.
The Coast Care/Coast Action area of NRE is working with the group.

At the Field Day there will be displays to assist with identification and control of undesirable weeds, ways of encouraging growth of original vegetation and discussion on the re-introduction of the original bird and mammal population.

For further information phone:
Peter Dalton 03 5259 2669 or write to:
PO Box 11, Portarlington, 3223

[Peter Dalton, is a local Portarlington resident who is trying to form a 'Friends of the Portarlington Flora and Fauna Reserve' group. He has asked the Club if members would be willing to do surveys of the flora and fauna at the Reserve. If you are interested, please contact the Committee or Peter.]

A Glow Worm from the Otways

...Dave King

216/86 Church Street, Grovedale 3216

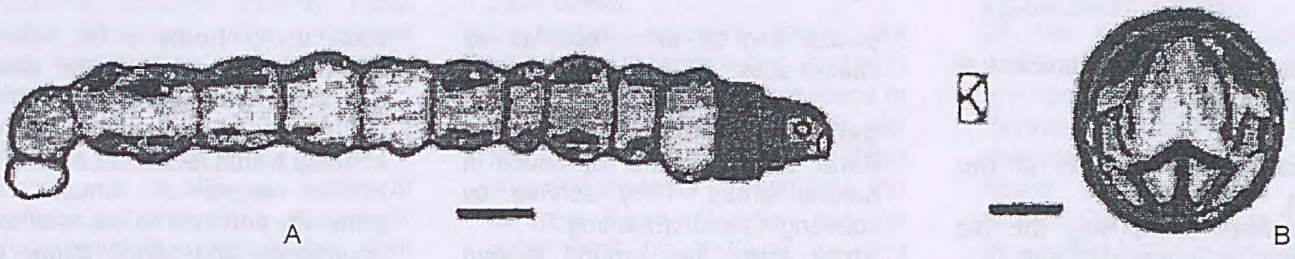

Fig. A . *Arachnocampa* larva; Fig. B. Frontal view of head. Bars represent 1 mm and 0.25 mm respectively.

Introduction

During a recent mammal trapping survey in the Otway Ranges advantage was taken of an evening to seek out a colony of Glow Worms. An extensive colony was found on the sides of a cutting through which ran the Upper Gellibrand Road, situated 1 km S.W. of Barramunga, 38° 34'S 143° 40'E. Recent rains had afforded a large area of moist habitat, indicated by thousands of small points of pale blue light spread through the cutting. It was decided that a specimen of this creature would be of great interest. Obtaining such was more difficult than anticipated, due to the presence of a deep ditch and extremely slippery conditions. This apart from the fact that exact the location of the specimen had to be established before illuminating the area with a lamp. The writer's granddaughter, Emily, with the advantage of youthful agility was able to secure us a specimen that appeared to be fully 'charged', producing an excellent degree of pale blue light when placed in an opaque film canister.

Consulting the normal literature provided little in the way of determining the species. However, surfing the Internet proved to be helpful. Contact was made with David Merritt, Dept. of Zoology & Entomology, Queensland University, (Merritt, 2001). He had collected in the Otways at Melba Gully. Given that this was close to Barramunga and of similar habitat, he was of the opinion that species from each location would be the same. (Merritt, pers. comm.)

At this stage the Melba Gully specimens have not been positively identified. It can be confidentially said that the genus is *Arachnocarpa,* with the possibility of the species being either *A. flava* or *A. richardsae,* Queensland and N.S. W. species respectively. (Merritt, pers. comm.) They belong to the Order Diptera, and Family Keroplatidae. The Glow Worm is actually the larval stage of a Fungus Gnat. Adult Fungus Gnats need to be bred out from the larva in order to determine the exact species, a process yet to be effectively performed.

Description of Larva

Overall length approximately 12 mm, and generally as shown in Fig. A. The integument is transparent, with patches of black pigment, the internal organs being clearly visible. The head capsule and first two body segments have a brown chitin cuticle. A pair of shearing mandibles are placed vertically on the front face. Eyes are placed laterally on low pedestals, Fig. B.

The posterior body segment, of sub-spherical shape, contains the light emitting tissues. No legs are present; locomotion is achieved by peristaltic (Gk. peri, around; L. stellein, to draw in) pulses moving in wave-like motion along the body, much in the manner of the earthworm.

Light Production

The glowing light, bioluminescence, is produced by a complicated chemical reaction, basically Luciferin + Luciferase + ATP + O (Chapman, 1975). Luciferin is a waste product, probably produced in the Malpighian tubules that essentially control water and mineral content of the haemolymph (Gk. haima, blood; lympha, water). Luciferase is an enzyme that acts upon Luciferin, ATP (adenosine triphosphate) an energy source for providing that required for chemical reaction in each cell, and oxygen (Starr, 1975).

The light producing organ contains a number of relatively large cells called photocytes placed just beneath the epidermis. Each photocyte is packed with granules, and supplied with oxygen via a series of trachea. Nerves attached to each photocyte control the light producing reaction. The energy produced by the reaction is highly efficient, close to 100% light and very little heat (Rowney, 1966).

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An illustrated talk given at the General Meeting, 3 April 2001
by Sue Hutchings on

CAT PREDATION & CATS AT THE ANGLESEA TIP

...Roy Whiteside

The speaker is a PhD student at Deakin University.

The cat family consists of two **genera**
1. **Panthera** comprising the big cats (lions and tigers etc.) and
2. **Felis** comprising the **Domestic House Cat**, ***Felis catus*** (the most numerous of the cat family) and about 25 other species (e.g. ocelot and fishing cat).

Differences between the genera
Panthera roar but do not purr and Felis purr but do not roar. This is due to the difference in the hyoid bone at the base of the tongue. Panthera eat in a crouching position whereas Felis eat in a lying down position

Ancestors of *Felis catus* were originally thought to be **the Wild Cat, *Felis silvestris*.**
These have a wide range across continents from fat ones in Scotland to thin ones in India. The **Scottish Wild Cat** is a fierce individual and is untameable even when hybridised with a Domestic Cat. The **African Wild Cat** is much more docile, is easily tamed and associates with human settlement. It is more likely that this species was the ancestor of ***Felis catus***.

Cat introduction and spread in Australia
Although cats were deliberately introduced with the First Fleet in 1788, they may have arrived earlier as survivors from shipwrecks. They have since rapidly spread across the continent and many offshore islands. The animals were brought as pets and for controlling introduced animals (rabbits, rats and mice etc.). Cats are more widespread than foxes since the latter need fresh water for survival. Cats survive in arid regions by obtaining moisture by eating the contents of the stomachs and intestines of their prey. The spread of the European rabbit has enabled cats to survive by providing a food source and by using burrows as shelter sites.

Definitions
Feral cats live and reproduce in natural areas. They survive by scavenging and/or hunting.
Stray cats live around human habitation in both urban and rural areas. They are not owned but may rely on some of the resources supplied by humans.
Domestic cats are owned cats with needs supplied by humans.

World Distribution Density of Feral Cats depends on:
1. Habitat
a) In urban areas the density is high due to abundant food provided either by well-meaning people or from scavenging in garbage and rubbish bins.
b) In certain fishing villages of Japan where there are fish garbage dumps, the density is very high.
c) In natural habitats where cats generally have to hunt in order to survive densities are usually much lower.
d) In Rome there is a fenced-off park with up to 2000 cats where cats are fed by people and they also eat from garbage bins at a nearby market.
e) In most farming and agricultural areas of the world the density is fairly low.
2. Season
a) Density is usually higher in summer because juvenile cats start to enter the population.
b) In winter the density tends to be lower because food is less and disease tends to be more prevalent and some cats die.

Range of operation of cats
Extended home range is the area used by individuals during their normal daily activities. It comprises a series of regularly visited areas that are connected by pathways and are used for hunting, courtship and fighting other cats.
Territory is an area that is specifically defended.
First order home is the territory within the **extended home range** and is generally used for sleeping, resting, grooming, sunbathing and keeping watch for other cats.
Home ranges of females are generally confined to areas of food abundance and shrink during the breeding season when the cat is confined to a den site (or maybe a connected food site as well). The home range of males depends on the location of female cats.

Studies at Anglesea tip
Sue has made studies of the home ranges of cats at this site. These studies have been aided by the use of the radio-collar, which consist of a transmitter, battery and aerial. A cat is attracted into a cat trap and is caught when the trap's door closes after pulling on a baited hook or by treading on a pressure plate. To aid the handling of a captured cat, it is first given a sedative. It is not completely anaesthetised and the effect of the sedative can be reversed with an anti-serum in about one minute, which helps to minimise the stress on the animal.
Before the cat is released, the functioning of the radio-collar is checked via a radio-tracking aerial and multi-channel telemetry receiver. The cat is released at the site of capture and radio tracking is commenced. As well as giving information on the cat's movements, the radio-collar also has a mortality sensor, which emits a fast beep signal when the cat is moving and a slow beep signal when the cat is stationary.
The nature of the Anglesea tip site is changing all the time. Garbage with fresh food is interspersed with solid waste (concrete etc.). Since the tip is surrounded by heathland there is an opportunity to study what prey is taken from a natural area as well. Cats living at the tip were each given an identifying name. Most of them stayed close to the tip, but with one exception, a brown tabby cat, which had learnt to visit a distant football oval on a

Thursday evening. This cat would scavenge from food scraps left in a rubbish bin by the football team after completion of their after-practice barbecue. Sue found that cats ate about 80% meat and chicken scraps and about 20% mammal species (mainly Ring-tailed Possums, with introduced rats hardly taken at all because of their ability to fight back).

Activity levels of feral cats

There are usually two peaks of activity per day. One at sunset/ dusk, which is usually longer than the one at dawn. At least 14 hours per day is spent resting or sleeping.

Breeding

All cats are induced ovulators i.e. they have to mate with a male before they can start producing eggs to become pregnant. They normally have 2 litters a year, but 3 litters are possible where food is readily available.

Late autumn and early winter is the an-oestrus period, i.e. no breeding occurs. This is usually followed by cycles of oestrus, conception and a post-oestrus period, which is a response to the increasing period of daylight hours of early spring. Kittens are usually born in late September or early October following conception in late July or early August.

Den sites are used by cats to protect their kittens from other cats, predators, humans, and the elements. Unlike foxes who construct their dens, cats make use of sites that happen to be available. Kittens are usually weaned at about 8 weeks and then become independent of their mother. From that age until 5 months they are classified as juveniles. Maturity is reached at about one year for females and 15 months for males.

Study of Diet

Cats are obligate carnivores i.e. they must eat at least 150 gm of protein a day. In Australia they prey on some 100 species of bird, 50 species of mammal and 50 species of reptile and numerous species of frogs and insects. Mammals are by far the most important item (except sometimes on islands where birds may be more available as prey items).

There is a variation in diet between

1. **Rural/agricultural areas** where rabbits, rats and mice are generally prevalent. Cats can co-exist with foxes in these areas because cats tend to take young rabbits for their kittens whereas foxes take the adult ones.
2. **Native habitats** where the introduced mammals are usually in lower numbers so they are found to prey extensively on wildlife for food. By examining faeces and the stomach contents of dead cats, the different types of prey can be determined by studying fur and bone fragments.

Seasonal changes in diet

This varies from place to place. In the Australian summer, more mammals are taken because that is when juveniles are entering the cat population. More insects are taken in summer and autumn when they are more plentiful.

Reptiles are taken more often in spring when they are less active and are slow to escape from cats.

Prey items of domestic cats

An Adelaide researcher has documented the prey items of a sample of domestic cats. The information was obtained from cat owners who collected prey items brought home by their cats. It was found that about 55% of these cats brought home birds, about 55% brought home mammals and over 30% brought home reptiles. It was found that an average cat kills 16 birds, 32 mammals and 16 reptiles a year. This means that in Victoria alone the 800,000 domestic cats would kill about 50 million prey items in one year. Australia's fauna is therefore under a lot of threat from domestic as well as feral cats. The problem is particularly bad where human settlements are close to native habitats.

Precautions that have little impact on destruction of fauna

Feeding a cat twice a day does little to stop cats killing fauna because they do it by instinct. Placing bells on collars does not help because a cat learns to silence its bell by holding it under its chin prior to pouncing on prey. Keeping cats inside at night does reduce hunting to a certain extent since most Australian mammals are nocturnal. However, birds can be readily preyed upon during daylight hours.

Domestic cats need to be confined to aviaries or kept indoors at all times to avoid the killing of wildlife.

Endangered Species

Of the some 1600 species of vertebrates in Australia about 300 are considered endangered. Since European settlement, 17 species of mammal, 3 species of bird and 1 lizard species have become extinct. Cat predation is thought to be a major factor in the decline and extinctions of vertebrates. Other factors are drought/climatic changes, other introduced predators (foxes, rats, mice), rabbits, disease and altered fire patterns.

Some of the effects of predation on wildlife

1. Feral cat numbers tend to follow increases and decreases in rabbit population.
2. Reduction in the range or distribution of a species can result from a reduction of refuge areas, which reduces the incidence of gene flow between small populations of species. For instance, in parts of the wheat-belt of WA, Black-footed Rock-wallabies have been restricted to separate small rocky outcrops. Populations of these animals are unable to cross through open areas without being preyed upon by foxes. A similar situation has almost occurred in Victoria due to predation by cats on Eastern-barred bandicoots. Cats can pass on a toxoplasmosis disease to the bandicoots. Cats can have an effect on indigenous carnivores either by preying on them or competing with them for food. If rabies were to be accidentally introduced to Australia, cats, dogs, foxes and dingoes would spread it readily. Predation of cats on honey-eating birds can result in reduced pollination of flowering plants and reduced seed production.

Some fauna vulnerable to cat predation

Mammals

Eastern barred bandicoot, Long-nosed Potoroo, Tasmanian Bettong, New Holland Mouse and Rufous Hare-wallaby. An attempt

Cocky the Jockey

...Robert Ganly

Through the auspices of Margaret Cameron, Alcoa are paying GFNC for me to do some bird counting at Point Henry. After finishing one morning in early June, I stumbled across a sight that was a real eye-opener for me!

I had decided to see if the three 'resident' Brolgas were present nearby, and so they were, and I was delighted to witness a dance at close-up before they departed for, I'm told, Reedy Lake/Lake Connewarre on a somewhat regular daily basis, sometimes returning late afternoon.

As I continued driving down the road, ruminating over my good luck I caught a flash of white and thought – a sulphur-crested cocky, that's a first for me out here. I turned round at the bend to came back for a better look, and what a look it was! There in the paddock, perched on the head of a white, rugged horse, sat a Long-billed Corella! As I scrambled for my binoculars the Corella hopped down onto the horse's back and they ambled off together across the paddock, the horse stopping to graze and the Corella grazing also at the horse's feet, but continually hopping back onto his transport.

After watching with amusement/amazement for some time I spied the paddock owner in his front garden, so I approached and inquired if the Corella was his pet. 'No' he replied, 'It flew in about three weeks ago, has adopted the horse and they are inseparable.' The farmer had then asked round the neighbourhood but no one was missing an aviary or pet bird.

As it turns out, there are two other horses agisted in the same paddock, but cocky only has eyes for the white. When the horses are fed daily by their owner, cocky gets fed too, otherwise performing vocally and vigorously. However, all may not augur well, as cocky has put his long bill to use and has taken to undoing the stitching of his friend's warm coat, much to the consternation of the horse's owner!

For those interested, turn down Hays Road and look for the horses in the paddock next to the house on the left, just past Winchester. You may also spot the Flame Robins in the same paddock, and further down on both sides of the road. I visit now to see if he is still there, and the following weekend I came across seven whistling kites in the gums on the right of the road, just round the bend.

P.S. June 19
Forget the sighting - cocky's flown the coop! Early on the morning of Tuesday 19th cocky was being fed by a Winchester employee when three galas flew overhead, screeching as only they can – cocky took off immediately after them and hasn't been sighted since!

(Continued from page 9)
to re-introduce a number of these Hare-wallabies to the wild, after a captive breeding program, was a failure because one feral cat wiped out the lot.

Birds.
Orange-bellied Parrot (in Tasmania), Swift Parrot, Forty-spotted Parrot, Ground Parrot.

Some management techniques

Trapping, using cage or leg-hold traps (with a soft holding feature). This is fairly successful in urban areas but not very successful in rural areas because animals in those areas are wary of foreign objects.

Shooting, but this method is usually only possible in flat open areas away from towns.

1080 (Sodium-fluoro-acetate) baiting. This was originally used to kill rats in USA. It is successful in the control of foxes in NT and WA without being fatal to native fauna. This is due to sodium-fluoro-acetate occurring naturally in a number of native plants in these States and many fauna species have developed immunity. In Eastern Australia native animals (e.g. quolls and bandicoots) have not had access to this chemical and have not built up immunity. 1080 poison is not suitable for controlling cats because the bait has to be buried and cats will not dig it up. Cats also prefer live bait. 1080 baits are in pellet form and less than one pellet is enough to kill a cat, dog, fox or rabbit. To kill a human being requires 133 pellets, a Kangaroo 300, an Emu over 200, a Wedge-tailed Eagle 13 and other birds at least 20.

Suppression of primary prey e.g. reduced rabbit numbers.

Biological control has been tried by using viruses e.g. cat flu but this only works in areas where cats have not developed antibodies.

Trevor Pescott gave a vote of thanks to the speaker.

LIBRARY NOTES

...Betty Moore

Natural Heritage – Journal of the Natural Heritage Trust. The 120,000 hectare Gawler Ranges National Park lies 350 km northwest of Adelaide and is South Australia's first new national park in eight years. It conserves arid woodlands, shrub lands and hummock grasslands, and will create wildlife corridors by joining the Flinders and Gammon Ranges, thereby assisting migratory birds moving between the drier pastoral areas to the north and wetter arable areas to the south.

Community Projects 2000 – 2001 lists all the community projects helping Australia which were given funding by the Natural Heritage Trust.

Bush Heritage News (Australian Bush Heritage Fund)
An account is given of Carnarvon Station which is now the thirteenth Bush Heritage Reserve.

Fascinating facts and frightening statistics are given about the state of much of Australia's environment, and the effects of land clearing, salinity, and the effects of feral pigs in the Daintree.

Coastline – Coast Action covers Marine and Coastal Management, Light and Plant Growth and the International Year of Volunteers. Southwest Regional Snippets gives an account of the Launch of Erskine River and Stoney Creek Catchment Plan – Lorne.

Timelines (Australia Project News) Longevity in Corellas and Albatrosses, and Decline of the Treecreepers are the first two subjects in this issue – there are many other interesting items. For instance, did you know that Lichens are excellent environmental indicators? They are composite plants made up of fungal tissue embedded in layers of algae. They absorb several times their own weight in water during wet weather and also soak up and accumulate environmental chemicals and dust particles present. They only grow a few millimetres a year and many are centuries old.

The Library has two new **Parks Victoria** publications on Western District Lakes Ramsar Sites.

Parks Victoria have also put out two interesting publications – *State of the Parks 2000.*

Volume 1 covers the park system. It has maps and beautiful colour photographs.

Volume 2 is the first report and presents a snapshot of the current condition of over 3.6 million hectares of protected areas.

Is this normal behaviour?

...Robert Ganly

While checking the well-being of the horse-riding Corella at Point Henry (see article page 10), mid afternoon June 20th during a high wind I noticed, for me anyway, the apparent bizarre behaviour of two Whistling Kites up at the bend in the road.

With talons projecting downwards they were circling the crown of the tallest gum, and with the aid of the stiff breeze continually crashing into the treetop and then flying off again. At first I thought they were attacking another predator, or after prey, until I noticed gum leaves in the claws of one who I assume was the male and was much more adept at this manoeuvre as I later ascertained. In flight and in the high wind these leaves were adroitly transferred to the talons of the second bird, which then transferred them to 'her' beak and disappeared over the treetops for a short period, then re-appearing, whereby the procedure was repeated. Am I correct in assuming they are a mating pair and the leaves are to line their nest? According to HANZAB this behaviour has not been recorded before for Whistling Kites.

Imagine my surprise when, as I was about to leave, two more appeared and, I think but I can't be certain, proceeded with the same behaviour.

On June 6th my wife and I had come across seven, and possibly eight, Whistling Kites roosting in the one tree at this same site so there could be multiple nesting. Is this an isolated observation regarding an apparent 'colony' of Whistling Kites? According to HANZAB, pre-nesting flocks have been observed to form before mating. Is this an isolated observation in our area?

Reference:

Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds; Volume 2: Raptors to Lapwings. Ed. Marchant, S., and Higgins, P.J; 1993: Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

THE ORANGE-BELLIED PARROT RECOVERY TEAM
is seeking volunteers to assist with
TREE PLANTING – LAKE CONNEWARRE
0930 hrs Sunday 12 August 2001
Shelter/roost site for Orange-bellied Parrots.

With the cooperation of local property owner Cliff Rossack, 250 native trees of 3 species: Moonah *(Malaleuca lanceolata)*, Prickly Tea-tree *(Leptospermum continentale)* and Sweet Bursaria *(Bursaria spinosa)* are to be planted on a portion of his land especially set aside for the purpose of creating a shelter/roost site for Orange-bellied Parrots.

This section of land immediately abuts the Lake Connewarre Wildlife Reserve on the eastern side. The tube-stock seedlings and wire guards have been supplied by the Geelong Office of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Port Phillip Region.

The Orange-bellied Parrot Recovery Team is seeking volunteers to assist in this most important project. Lake Connewarre is one of the most significant wintering localities for these critically endangered parrots. The Recovery Team members consider it is vital to provide this shelter/roost site in close proximity to one of the parrots' favoured feeding grounds.

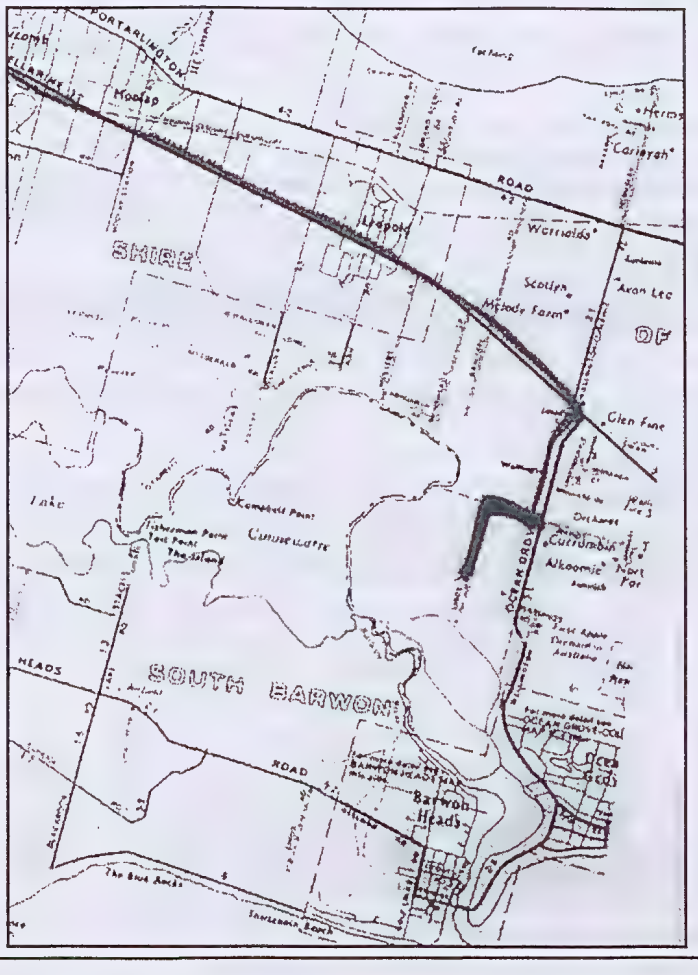
YOUR PERSONAL ASSISTANCE IS URGENTLY REQUIRED!

Please bring warm clothing, gumboots, garden trowel or spade, gardening gloves, folding chair or stool and binoculars. The more volunteers participating the quicker the task will be completed; allowing time to observe nearby Blue-winged Parrots and maybe Orange-bellied Parrots.

Meet at Cliff Rossack's property near Lake Connewarre 0930 hrs on Sunday 12 August 2001.

FROM GEELONG – take the Queenscliff Road (Bellarine Highway) travelling through Leopold to the Wellington intersection. Turn right at this junction onto the Ocean Grove Road and travel approximately 400 – 500 metres to **Lings Road.** Turn right into Lings Road, which turns left after a further 200 metres or so, and continue to its end where we will assemble by 0930 hrs.

Len Robinson Ph. 03 9568 0383



MID-WEEK BIRD GROUP EXCURSION REPORT

21 June, 2001

...Pat Streefkerk

The weather was cold but the rain held off for us as 10 people led by Polly and Kay headed off into the You Yangs. I think the birds were not appreciating the cold and somewhat windy conditions as there were fewer sightings than could perhaps have been expected, but we still had an enjoyable morning with 46 species sighted. We started at the entrance area then around Great Circle Drive with a stop at Big Rock and another at the boneseed pulling area (according to Hans this used to be called Piccaninny Gully). We also stopped along the southern side at the gate where unfortunately there were no Diamond Firetails to be seen, and then another stop at the dam where the Owlet Nightjar obligingly peered out at us from his nest box. He/she seemed as curious to watch us, as we were to watch him!

Seen during the morning were, Red Wattlebirds, Magpies, Galah, White-plumed Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, Willie Wagtails, Straw-necked Ibis, Jackie Winter, Whistling Kite, Eastern Rosella, Superb Fairy-wren, Scarlet Robin, Little Raven, Yellow Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Brown Thornbill, Grey Fantail, Yellow Robin, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Eastern Spinebill, Grey Shrike-thrush, White-winged Chough, Black-shouldered Kite, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Crimson Rosella, Spotted Turtledove, White-throated Treecreeper, Welcome Swallow, Kookaburra, Silvereye, Red-browed Finch – a big flock, Goldfinch, Pacific Black Ducks, Little Pied Cormorant, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Starling, Masked Lapwing, Yellow Spoonbill, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Corellas – too far away to be sure about long bills and short bills! Wood Ducks, Owlet Nightjar, Mistletoe Bird, Bronzewing, and the ubiquitous Blackbird.

We were also fortunate enough to spot 2 White-winged Chough nests and Polly found a patch of greenhood orchids, but not quite out yet. Most people could not resist pulling the odd boneseed as they walked along but of course there is still plenty there.

It was good to have Gwyn Wise, who enjoyed her couple of days as a visitor to the midweek bird group so much that she has now joined the Field Nats. Some of our regulars are away on winter holidays and sent their greetings. We hope they are warmer than we were!

Our thanks to Polly, Kay and all who were there and shared their knowledge.

Imagine if you will...

Imagine if you will, a flock of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos feeding from John's brother's feed tables.

After 10 weeks with no precipitation, a fine misty rain began and the flock rose as one and flew to the top of the gums.

Landing on the flimsiest of branches, which immediately drooped, with the weight of the bird. The cockies now upside down, stretched their wings to full span whilst the mist continued.

They thoroughly enjoyed their down-side-up shower. When the mist stopped they flew down to continue feeding. A little later when mist returned, they repeated the process much to Kevin and Carol's delight.

I'd like to see that! Have you?

Barbara Bell

NEXT MID-WEEK BIRD GROUP EXCURSION
POINT HENRY WETLANDS

Thursday, 5th July, 2001
(Note change to 1st Thursday – not 3rd Thursday)

Leader - Margaret Cameron

We are very lucky to have Margaret Cameron leading this outing – she has been studying the wetlands area, and surveying birds there for Alcoa over a considerable period of time. There is a remarkable diversity of bird life, two members on a resent visit of an hour and a half recorded a total of 50 species.

Meet at 8.30 am at the Jerringot Bird Hide, Belmont Common, or at 9.00 am in Hays Road just around the corner from Pt Henry Road (1.7 km from Portarlington Road).

Finish midday. Bring morning tea and a scope if you have one, (and gumboots could be handy).

Enquiries Polly Cutcliffe 5244 0182

(August 16 excursion will be to Queenscliff Golf Course—hoping for OBSs again.)

BIRD GROUP REPORT

19 June, 2001

...Barry Lingham

Speaker: Susan Myers 'Birds of Vietnam'

Susan is one of the tour guides from the Birding Worldwide company that runs nature tours focusing on the birds of various parts of the world. Susan has led several tours to Vietnam, including the tour in December 2000 when Margaret Cameron was a participant.

Vietnam is located on the eastern side of the Indo-China Peninsula. It is a long, narrow country over 1600 km from north to south, but covering an area only 1.5 times that of Victoria. The population of 76 million is concentrated in the delta areas of the two huge rivers that drain into the South China sea – the Mekong in the south and the Red River to the north.

The coastal lowlands are largely used for agriculture, but the rugged ranges that form the western boundary with Laos are less developed. Vietnam has twelve endemic species and over 860 observed bird species.

The tour began in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), the busy industrious centre of the south. People mainly commute by bicycle, with many in traditional Vietnamese costume. The remnants of the period spent as a French colony can be seen in some of the architecture of the city.

Very few birds were seen outside the National Parks and this was most likely due to the heavy toll taken by hunters who take birds to eat and other collectors who sell caged birds. Some species noted in the botanic gardens included the Black-naped Oriole, Coppersmith Barbet and the brilliantly coloured Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker. The bird with a melodious call was the Common Lora.

Cat Bien National Park is situated in a large area of isolated lowland rainforest. The trees have massive root buttresses and lianas hang from the branches. It is the home of many birds including 6 Pheasant species, 2 species of Laughing Thrush and several Pitta species.

The rangers live inside the park and protect the resident wildlife, but others park residents survive as fish farmers. Susan showed photographs of Orange-necked Partridge, Black and Crimson Broadbill, Pink-necked Pigeon, Scaly-crowned Babbler, Striped Tit-Babbler, Ashy Minivet and Oriental Pied Hornbill.

Crocodile Lake in the centre of the park is over 20 km long. Near here, impressive Stork-billed Kingfishers can be seen or the magnificent Green Peafowl that is even more spectacular than the better known Blue Peafowl.

The rare Javan Rhinoceros was discovered here 20 years ago – it is thought that between 5 and 7 of the animals still survive.

The next stop was at Da Lat in the highlands. It was very wet at the time, but this area is home to birds such as the Grey-crowned Crocias, Mountain Bulbul, Black-browed Barbet, Red-throated Flycatcher and several species of Spiderhunters.

Further north, after visiting Hanoi, the tour visited Cuc Phoung National Park. The area is dominated by limestone formations and sub-tropical rainforest. Here were seen Changeable Hawk Eagle, Green-billed Malcohas, Black-crested Bulbul, the beautiful, bright blue Large Niltava, Red-headed Trogan and Jungle Myna.

On the Red River Delta, various waders and waterbirds were noted including Spoonbilled Sandpiper, Black-faced Spoonbill and Grey Heron.

Sapa is a small market town in Northwest Vietnam. It was the base for exploration of the lower slopes of Mount Fan Si Pan, Vietnam's highest mountain.

The area has a mix of Vietnamese, Chinese and Himalayan bird species. The list includes Long-tailed Shrike, Blue Rock-Thrush, White-capped Redstart, Little Pied Flycatcher, Red-tailed Minla, Whiskered Yuhina and Spot-breasted Parrotbill.

With the wide range of bird species that can be found in Vietnam, a good reference book is very useful to be able to recognise the particular species likely to be encountered. Susan recommended *A Field Guide to the Birds of South-east Asia* by Craig Robson et al. This is available for around $65.00 and covers birds from Vietnam and many other countries of the SE Asian region.

The birds of Vietnam are both spectacular and unusual, but they are restricted to the areas that are less vulnerable to the impact of hunting. Susan Myers is an expert on the culture of Vietnam and the special birds of this country. We appreciated her informative presentation. Several detailed brochures on the tours run by Birding worldwide are available from Barry if you are interested.

Next Month Speaker:
Chris Tsaros will speak on **'Birds in the Bendigo area.'**

Note that this is a slight change of geography from the originally advertised topic. Many people know of Chris through his work in the threatened species network.

Note :

The annual Orange-bellied Parrot count is being held on Sunday 29 July.

If you can assist in the count, contact Barry 52554291 or Jon Starks from Birds Australia on j.starks@birdsaustralia.com.au

NEW MEMBER

Ms Beverly Atkinson

We wish her a long and enjoyable association with our Club.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS May 2001

-- compiled by John Bottomley

Winter is well and truly upon us. Many of the observations this month are typical of the season. Among these are several reports of White-morph Grey Goshawks, numerous reports of Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos (including reports of large flocks) and several reports of Gang-gang Cockatoos. Less noticeable but just as typical of the season are Pink and Flame Robins for each of which there are several reports. The early winter rains which turned many paddocks north of Geelong into temporary wetland, have produced some interesting records. Rohan Bugg reports a Yellow-billed Spoonbill and Australasian Grebe from paddocks near Balliang. A Yellow-billed Spoonbill and nesting Black Swan are reported to the south of Anakie. Marilyn Hewish continues to turn up interesting sightings in and around the Long Forest. Her more notable reports this month are of Great Crested Grebe with a swimming young at Lake Merrimu, Chestnut-rumped Heathwren and Fuscous Honeyeaters in the Long Forest proper. Several reports are for large flocks of birds with Rob Preston's report of 2000+ Little Ravens taking first prize! Keep the reports coming in please.

Observations were submitted by (BAt) Bryant Attwood, (BF) Bernie Franke, (BL) Barry Lingham, (DHe) Dean Hewish, (DK) Dave King, (GMc) Gordon McCarthy, (JB) John Bottomley, (JCa) Jocelyn Calvert, (JCl) Judy Clarke - (ALCOA), (JH) Joe Hubbard, (KC) Kay Campbell, (MHe) Marilyn Hewish, (PS) Penny Smith, (RBa) Ray Baverstock, (RBu) Rohan Bugg, (RG) Rob Ganly, (RK) Rachel Keary, (RP) Bob Preston, (RWh) Roy Whiteside, (VWD) Valda Dedman.

Species	No.	Date	Comments	Observer
Brown Quail	2	26/05/01	Lake Merrimu. In scrub on shoreline.	MHe, DHe
Black Swan	2	7/06/01	Ballan Rd north of Staceys Road. Nesting in a flooded paddock.	JB, JCa
Australasian Grebe	2	19/06/01	Balliang East. In a flooded paddock.	RBu
Great Crested Grebe	3	26/05/01	Lake Merrimu. A pair feeding small fish to a swimming striped young bird.	MHe, DHe
Darter	1	8/06/01	Leopold. In lagoons in Gateway Reserve. An immature.	DK
	2	Since Feb.	Queens Park. Regularly present on River to 11/06/01.	RG
White-necked Heron	1	13/06/01	Inverleigh-Winchelsea Road near Barwon River.	BF
	1	18/06/01	Gnarwarre.	BF
Cattle Egret	3	17/05/01	Werribee Open Range Zoo. In paddock with Bison!	RBu
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	7/06/01	Geelong-Ballan Road north of Staceys Road. In flooded paddock.	JB
	2	19/06/01	Balliang East. In flooded paddocks.	RBu
Grey Goshawk	2	2/04/01	Ocean Grove Nature Reserve. White-morph birds.	BL
	2	19/05/01	Queens Park. White-morph birds exchanging prey in flight. One seen 21/05/01.	RG, KC
	1	3/06/01	Buckley Falls. A white-morph bird.	RWh
	1	17/06/01	Fyansford. A white-morph bird.	BF
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	4/06/01	Werribee Open Range Zoo.	RBu
Black Falcon	1	5/06/01	Werribee Open Range Zoo.	RBu
Peregrine Falcon	1	13/06/01	Werribee Open Range Zoo.	RBu
Nankeen Kestrel	2	22/05/01	Mount Pollock.	BF
	8	June.	Fyansford at cement silos. Four pairs. One pair appears to be nesting.	RG
Brolga	3	May.	Point Henry. Have been present all month.	BL
	3	6/06/01	Point Henry. Last time seen in this location.	JCl
Banded Stilt	380	15/06/01	Moolap Saltworks. In flock with Avocets below.	GMc
Red-necked Avocet	140	15/06/01	Moolap Saltworks.	GMc
Silver Gull	1000+	18/06/01	Belmont Oval.	RP
Crested Pigeon	8	7/06/01	Two at West Gateway Road. Six on Carrs Road west of Bacchus Marsh Road.	JB
	1	12/06/01	Werribee Open Range Zoo. In car park.	RBu
	15	17/06/01	Bacchus Marsh Road south of Exford Road. On wires.	VWD, JH
	1	19/06/01	Balliang.	RBu
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	30+	30/03/01	Waurn Ponds. Flying over Deakin University.	PS
	15	19/04/01	Belmont. Flying east at 1030.	RP
	10	24/04/01	Grovedale. Flying into pines north of Waurn Ponds Creek.	DK
	53	16/05/01	Belmont. Two flocks flying north at 1130.	RP
	30-50	1/06/01	Mount Duneed.	RK
	2	8/06/01	Grovedale. Flying southwest at 1645.	DK

Continued on page 16

Species	No.	Date	Comments	Observer
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	25	10/06/01	Brisbane Ranges. Clarkes Road near Ballan Road. Feeding on Bushy Needlewood *(Hakea decurrens)*.	JB, JCa, MHe, DHe
	12	11/06/01	Highton. Flying southwest at 1630.	BAt
	80+	12/06/01	Belmont. Flying northeast towards Jerringot at 1130.	RP
	20	14/06/01	Highton. Flying southwest at 1620.	BAt
	2	14/06/01	Belmont. Flying southwest at 1530.	RP
	20	17/06/01	Highton, Ceres Lookout. Flying north at 1020.	BAt
	60	19/06/01	Belmont. Flew in from north before flying of to the southeast at 1610.	VWD
	100-125	19/06/01	Highton, Barrabool Road. Flying north at 1230.	BAt
Gang-gang Cockatoo	8+	25/05/01	Highton. Flock flying northwest. Smaller numbers around for a few days.	RBa
	16	11/06/01	Belmont, North Valley Road. Flew in from the south before flying north.	VWD
Red-rumped Parrot	16	17/05/01	Buckley's Falls. Feeding on ground. Present over a ten-day period.	BAt
	10	17/06/01	Jerringot. Perched in tree.	BAt
Blue-winged Parrot	1	22/05/01	Long Forest. Djerriwarrh Track.	RBu
	10+	14/06/01	Mount Pollock.	BF
	70	18/06/01	Mount Pollock. 30 at Gnarwarre Road and 40 at Peels Road.	BF
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	1	18/06/01	Geelong, McIntyre footbridge. Heard calling.	BF
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	1	3/06/01	Point Henry, Windmill Road.	GMc
Southern Boobook	1	8/06/01	Gnarwarre. Roosting in hay shed.	BF
Barn Owl	1	10/06/01	Werribee. Flew over back yard at 2030.	RBu
Australian Owlet-nightjar	1	22/05/01	Long Forest, Djerriwarrh Track.	GMc
Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	1	20/05/01	Long Forest.	MHe
Yellow Thornbill	4	30/05/01	Geelong, Barwon River, Stan Lewis Walk.	RG
Fuscous Honeyeater	6	20/05/01	Long Forest at Long Point.	MHe, BellBOCA
	3	22/05/01	Long Forest at Long Point. Feeding in flowering Yellow Gum. Six other honeyeater species present.	RBu
White-naped Honeyeater	60-80	20/05/01	Long Forest at Long Point. In flowering yellow gums with yellow-faced and yellow-tufted honeyeaters.	MHe, BellBOCA
Eastern Spinebill	2	4/06/01	Highton. Feeding in trees in back garden.	RBa
Red-capped Robin	1	11/06/01	Long Forest. Very secretive at the present. Heard calling before sunrise.	MHe
Flame Robin	4	15/05/01	Mount Pollock. Two males and two brown birds.	BF
	3	21/05/01	Barongarook. One male, one immature and one female.	BF
	1	2/06/01	Serendip. A male.	GMc
	5	6/06/01	Ocean Grove Nature Reserve. Four males and one brown bird.	GMc
	4	19/06/01	Mount Pollock. One male and three females.	BF
Pink Robin	1	9/05/01	Werribee Free Range Zoo. Seen again 16/06/01.	RBu
	1	20/05/01	Long Forest. A brown bird. Also one on 25/05/01.	MHe
	1	22/05/01	Long Forest, Djerriwarrh Track.	RBu
	1	17/06/01	Fyansford.	BF
Crested Shrike-tit	1	17/06/01	Fyansford.	BF
Golden Whistler	1	23/05/01	DeMotts Road Anakie. A male in full breeding plumage.	JB
Restless Flycatcher	1	20/05/01	Lake Merrimu.	MHe, BellBOCA
Rufous Fantail	1	25/03/01	Ocean Grove Nature Reserve.	BL
Pied Currawong	20+	17/05/01	Highton. Similar numbers seen daily 29/5/01-2/06/01.	RBa
Australian Raven	1	21/05/01	Werribee Open Range Zoo. Unusual in Werribee.	RBu
Little Raven	2000+	15/04/01	Wingeel to west of Railway Station in burnt grassy area sprouting after rains.	RP
	120+	3/06/01	Wingeel. Two groups of 80 and 40 sitting on railway.	RP
Zebra Finch	5	24/05/01	Werribee Open Range Zoo.	RBu
Song Thrush	2	3/06/01	Highton. Singing for two to three hours.	RBa

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